

Claim 1 (Canceled).

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Canceled).

Claim 4 (Cancelled).

Claim 5 (Cancelled).

Claim 6 (Previously Presented). The on-demand needle retaining and locking mechanism as recited by claims 9 or 10 wherein said configured spool section includes a pair of sized notches.

Claim 7 (Canceled).

Claim 8 (Canceled).

Claim 9 (Currently Amended). In a needle-catheter assembly including a hollow, elongated needle-safety container of set dimensions and configuration, and presenting at least one discrete wall and an open front end adapted for passage there through by the tip of a piercing needle; a hollow needle housing of fixed dimensions and configuration, having at least one discrete wall and open front and rear ends, and being moveably mounted upon said needle-safety container; and a piercing needle disposed co-axially within the interior of the needle housing, the improvement of an on-demand needle retaining and locking mechanism to prevent premature withdrawal of the piercing needle into a safety chamber, said mechanism

comprising:

a needle-safety container which

(i) ~~is radially rotatable by hand~~ can be rotated radially on-demand,
and

(ii) has a sized solid tab member disposed at and extending
radially from said open front end at an aligned position; and

a needle housing mounted over said needle-safety container which

(a) is adapted for slidable axial movement and radial rotation
movement at will over said ~~rotatable~~ needle-safety container,

(b) has a ~~slidable hollow configured~~ spool section permanently
positioned at and joined to the front end of the said needle housing for
on-demand engagement with said solid tab member of said needle-
safety container after said needle-safety container has been radially
rotated, said hollow ~~configured~~ spool section comprising a central
cavity, open front and rear ends adapted for passage there through by
a piercing needle, ~~a flanged rib~~, a tab-engagement segment, and at
least one notch within said tab engagement segment, wherein

said ~~configured~~ spool section is alignable at will with said
solid tab member of said needle-safety container, and

said spool section can be engaged by and disengaged from

said solid tab member of said rotatable needle-safety container on-demand as a consequence of radially rotating said needle-safety container, and

the engagement of said spool section with said solid tab member of said radially rotated needle-safety container provides an on-demand needle retaining and locking mechanism which prevents premature withdrawal of a piercing needle into a safety chamber.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended). In a needle-catheter assembly including a hollow, elongated needle-safety container of set dimensions and configuration, and presenting at least one discrete wall and an open front end adapted for passage there through of the tip of a piercing needle; a hollow needle housing of fixed dimensions and configuration, having at least one discrete wall and open front and rear ends, and being moveably mounted upon said needle-safety container; and a piercing needle disposed co-axially within the interior of the needle housing, the improvement of an on-demand needle retaining and locking mechanism to prevent premature withdrawal of the piercing needle into a safety chamber, said mechanism comprising:

a needle-safety container comprised of

(i) a non-rotatable linear segment which is in an aligned axial orientation, and

~~which (i) is radially rotatable by hand on demand, and (ii) has a sized solid tab member disposed at and extending radially from said open front end at an aligned position;~~

(ii) a hollow collar segment which

(1) is ~~rotably~~ attached to and aligned with the open front end of said non-rotatable linear segment of said the needle-safety container, and can be radially rotated at will independently from said non-rotatable linear segment of said needle-safety container,

(2) presents at least one discrete wall of preset dimensions and configuration, and a central void space,

(3) has open front and rear ends adapted for passage there through of the tip of a piercing needle, and

(4) has a solid tab member disposed on and extending radially from said discrete wall ~~rotatable collar~~ at ~~an aligned~~ a fixed position; and

a needle housing mounted over said needle-safety container which

(a) is adapted for slidable axial movement at will over said ~~rotable~~-needle-safety container, and

(b) has a ~~slidable~~ configured spool section permanently positioned at and joined to the front end of the ~~said~~ needle housing for on-demand engagement with said solid tab member of said rotatable collar after said collar has been radially rotated, said configured spool section comprising a central cavity, open front and rear ends adapted for passage there through by a piercing needle, ~~a flanged rib~~, a tab-engagement segment, and at least one notch disposed within said tab engagement segment, wherein

said configured spool section is alignable at will with said solid tab member of said rotatable collar, and

said configured spool section can be engaged by and disengaged from said solid tab member of said rotatable collar on-demand as a consequence of radially rotating said collar, and

the engagement of said configured spool section with said solid tab member of said radially rotated collar provides an on-demand needle retaining and locking mechanism which prevents premature withdrawal of a piercing needle into a safety chamber.